EURAXESS India Newsletter is a quarterly electronic publication. It provides information about conducting research in Europe or with European partners and gives insights for Indian and European researchers who are interested in the European research landscape.

Please email to india@euraxess.net for any comments on this newsletter, contributions you would like to make.

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Slovenians like to joke that it is the only country in the world with love in its name! It is a small yet diverse, green and safe country for the 2 million people who call it home. As a multicultural and multilingual society, Slovenia is seen as a welcoming place to all. Visitors can enjoy the seaside, mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, vineyards, and many historical and cultural sites. Slovenia is also well positioned geographically with neighbours Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia.

As home to six universities and 16 public research institutes, there are many opportunities for researchers in various disciplines. There are visible research successes in many disciplines, ranging from medicine to nanotechnology, social sciences, engineering, artificial intelligence, environmental sciences and so on.

Research and science have always been an important part of Slovenian society – a predecessor of today’s Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Academia Operosorum Labacensium, was established in 1693 in Ljubljana.

Today, there are 15,327 researchers working in 989 research organisations, organised in 1581 research groups and working on 6703 projects.1

According to the 2017 Better Life Index by the OECD, Slovenia performed well in several measures of well-being, ranking above the average in job and earnings, housing, health status, social connections, education and skills, work-life balance, environmental quality, and personal security.

Slovenia is proud of its low-income inequality and high record of tertiary education among the adult population (33%), offering a high quality and accessible education, social and healthcare system.2

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1 EURAXESS country in focus: Slovenia

Facts about Slovenia:
- Capital: Ljubljana
- Area: 20,271 km²
- Population: 2.081 million (2019), 83% Slovene
- Language: Slovenian, Italian and Hungarian (co-official languages) with English widely spoken
- Currency: EURO
- Unemployment rate: 4.2%
- GDP per capita: 25,946 USD (2019)
- Funds for R&D activities in Slovenia around 2% of GDP
- Discover Slovenia at [www.slovenia.info/en](http://www.slovenia.info/en)
The national research and innovation (R&I) strategy is currently being revised. The main ministries involved are the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Economics with their agencies and public bodies.

The most relevant funding agency is the Slovenian Research Agency, a public funding organisation that performs tasks related to the national research and development programme and the European Research Area. Among many of its activities, the agency promotes international cooperation and funding.

In general, the Slovene R&I strategy is very much focused on responding to the needs of society and international cooperation, while encouraging co-creation and greater involvement by relevant stakeholders.

Backed by stable funding, this strategy aims to enhance the attractiveness and value of researchers’ work through supporting infrastructure and efficient and fair conditions.

Slovenia’s National Agency, CMEPIUS, is closely linked to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and responsible for the implementation of Erasmus+ programme, one of EU's largest programmes in the field of education, training, youth and sport. It is also responsible for the coordination of the Slovenian EURAXESS network of service centres and contact points, to assist international researchers and their families. It has a special EURAXESS portal for Slovenia, where researchers can find information about working and living in the country.

EURAXESS Slovenia is dedicated to enhancing its own skills to improve the services it offers to international researchers, assisting them while moving to Slovenia, searching for a job, funding or partners, as well as providing support with practical matters. It cooperates closely with relevant ministries, local authorities and embassies to make international mobility easier. The Slovenian branch is part of a larger pan-European network, cooperating in various projects and activities, exchanging valuable knowledge and experiences.

EURAXESS creates synergies with many other educational programmes and initiatives such as ‘Study in Slovenia’, a network of Slovene universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) which aims to promote Slovenia as a study destination. There is a comprehensive Study in Slovenia website, supported by social media, promoting Slovenian institutions and the quality of education, research and life.

Main Slovene research institutions

The University of Ljubljana is the largest and oldest HEI. It is internationally recognised for the high calibre of its scientific and research output. Its research and artistic activities are carried out at faculties and academies covering all research and artistic fields. In 2018, it established the Research and Development Centre of the University of Ljubljana linking various fields of research.
The **Jožef Stefan Institute** is the leading Slovenian scientific research centre, covering a broad spectrum of basic and applied research. The staff of about 1050 specialises in natural sciences, life sciences and engineering. Physicist and mathematician **Jožef Stefan** (1835-1893) discovered the law of light radiation, which is now called **Stefan’s Law**.

Funded in 1938, the **Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts** is the supreme national institution of sciences and arts. In 1693, the predecessor of the present-day Academy, the *Academia Operosorum*, was founded in Ljubljana (i.e. the same century as the *Académie française*, the Royal Society in London, and the *Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher in Schweinfurt*, or Leopoldina).

The **University of Maribor** has an ambitious development strategy focusing on sustainable, socially responsible and high-quality research. The university is commitment to excellence in research and to building and maintaining a strong international profile in the wider research space.

**Why Slovenia?**

The best people to answer this question are researchers who have already experienced working and living in the country.

**Julian Ascencio Vasquez** came from Chile to do his research at University of Ljubljana with the help of the EURAXESS portal. He says he very much appreciates the supporting environment he found himself in.

**Mike Burnard** came to the University of Primorska from Oregon, USA. He says that university-industry cooperation is solid, and there is funding available which meant he was able to create his own research environment. Slovenians have been welcoming hosts and he feels well integrated.

**Fayruza Ismagilova** is Russian but has no problems communicating with locals in English about everything. Her initial lectures in Slovenia soon grew into more international cooperation and projects, and she finds living in Slovenia very friendly.

Many international researchers that have found their place in Slovenia highly value the quality of life, dedication and cooperation among research teams, excellent infrastructure, tight links with industry, funding opportunities, as well as the support given by the host institutions.

All of the universities and research centres focus on cooperation with industry through joint projects, start-ups, spin-offs, and other forms of cooperation, making their shared work relevant and beneficial to society.

Slovenia certainly has a lot of potential and it is well worth exploring the mainstream as well as more niche disciplines, projects and developments. Some international researchers decide to stay, others leave and become bridges between countries and ambassadors of bilateral cooperation. Either way, it is a win-win situation for all.
1.1 Bilateral RTD cooperation between Slovenia and India

Slovenia and India have soon after Slovenian independence in June 1991 established legal framework for the cooperation in different fields. Science and Technology was among the first one to be recognized as one of the priorities in bilateral cooperation and Indian researchers and scientists have developed a reputation of an excellence in Slovenia in the past years.

Research, Technology and Development Cooperation between Slovenia and India is based on three pillars. First pillar represents bilateral agreements between our two countries: Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (1996) and its Programs (latest agreed for 2021-2023 period), and Agreement between on Cooperation in Culture, Arts, Education, Sports and the Public Media (1996) and its Programs (latest agreed for 2019-2024). Second pillar is based on Memorandums of Understanding between Slovenian and Indian Universities. And third pillar includes EU-India Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (2001) with its Horizon2020.

The latest Program on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which outlines concrete research and innovation cooperation between Slovenia and India for the period 2021-2023 is focused on Health, Biomedicine and Biotechnology; New Materials, including Polymers; Information and Communication Technologies; Renewable energy sources; Smart cities; Artificial Intelligence; and Water and Agriculture. 112 applications were received for the announced calls. Due to pandemic, there has been some delay in selection procedures, but most promising proposals should be selected by May this year.

Direct cooperation between High Education Institutions have also intensified in the recent years. There are currently around 50 Indian students (researchers and PhD student) pursuing further studies in Slovenia, many of them at Institute Jozef Stefan and at University in Ljubljana and University in Maribor. If younger than 26 years, they can avail of 24 bilateral scholarships that Slovenian Government offers to Indian students each year.

Slovenian and Indian Researchers and Scientists also collaborate at European Union level. Slovenian and Indian researchers and scientists joined hands in four joint projects through Horizon 2020, and in two EqUIP projects in social sciences and humanities research field.

In addition, Slovenia as well as India are also members of the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), an international intergovernmental organization based in Trieste, Italy. ICGEB has three branches: in Trieste, in New Delhi and in Cape Town, and its own laboratories in Trieste and New Delhi. Slovenian researchers are actively cooperating with branch laboratories in Trieste and New Delhi.

All governments conscious that today’s progress in development of the country depends greatly on research and innovation, have put this field high on the development agenda. Slovenia is no exception. The Government is not only encouraging research and innovation in the public and educational institutions but also in private sector (100% tax exemption for Research and
Innovation investments). It also conscious, like very clearly demonstrated by the current pandemic, that cooperation and collaboration between researchers and scientists among different countries bring faster progress and better innovative solutions. The objectives of these bilateral joint calls and the future cooperation in Horizon Europe are therefore welcomed and desirable and aim to strengthen scientific research cooperation between Slovenia and India, increase the mobility of Slovenian researchers and the number of visits of top Indian researchers to Slovenia.

References:

1. Source: Slovenian Current Research Information System - SICRIS

2. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-slovenia-2021-1_g2g9eb52-en
2 HOT TOPIC: HORIZON EUROPE - New opportunities for international cooperation

As Horizon Europe gears up, EURAXESS WORLDWIDE takes a closer look at the international dimension and what stronger cooperation means for mobile researchers who take the plunge.

Despite its name, Horizon Europe (HE) has a decidedly international flavour that extends way beyond the European continent. Running from 2021 to 2027 and with a budget of €95.5 billion – including €5.4 billion for the Next Generation of the EU ‘Recovery Fund’ – HE is the EU’s main funding programme for research and innovation.

Horizon Europe offers a number of new opportunities for international research cooperation. Take the European Research Council (ERC), for example, which has already issued, on 25 February, the first call under the Horizon Europe banner. This call sets aside €619 million of its €16 billion total HE budget for ‘starting grants’ to help top researchers get their own research team or programme up and running. That call’s deadline is 8 April!

What matters most here is the calibre of the research and here there is good news for international researchers: “The ERC offers grants to top researchers from anywhere in the world who are ready to come or to stay in Europe to pursue their breakthrough scientific and technological discoveries that can form the basis of new industries, markets, and social innovations of the future.”

On 15 March, the European Commission published its Horizon Europe Strategic Plan (2021-2024). This plan sets out the key directions that European research and innovation will take over the coming years, including a specific focus on international cooperation. It elaborates on a number of...
co-designed societal missions and how the EU can achieve other priorities including a climate-neutral and green economy which is “fit for the digital age and works for the people”.

For the uninitiated, Horizon Europe has three main strands: Pillar I prioritises excellent science, scientists and infrastructure; Pillar II addresses global challenges and European industrial competitiveness; and Pillar III concentrates on stimulating innovation. Horizontal actions explore ways to widen participation and strengthen the European Research Area (ERA), and other priorities.

This is also where EURAXESS and its international cooperation role comes into play, linking and promoting ERA as a single research destination (for incoming mobility and collaboration) from the rest of the science world – so-called third-countries not ‘associated’ with the framework programmes, i.e. Horizon Europe and its predecessors.

**Worldwide endeavour**

The science community’s rapid response to Covid-19 and the EU’s commitments to meet global challenges and build a resilient ‘green and digital’ economy through the Green Deal, Recovery Facility and other initiatives show what a connected community is capable of achieving. It also underlines the importance of cooperating with the rest of the world.

“International cooperation is a common priority throughout Horizon Europe,” according to a fact sheet produced by DG RTD to explain the main thrusts of its new Strategic Plan. “It is essential for tackling many global challenges and therefore underpins all four key strategic orientations.”

International cooperation is also a key enabler, providing valuable access to resources, infrastructure, know-how, value chains and markets outside the EU. The fact sheet points out that: “The EU will balance openness with the need to safeguard its interests in strategic areas and act in accordance with its high standards and principles.”

Clearly, global challenges call for international scientific responses. EURAXESS and its worldwide hubs and networks have a vital role to play in delivering the skills and making mobility and knowledge exchange as simple and enjoyable as possible. Take the plunge!
3 In focus: How to look for EU funded projects (CORDIS)

Are you keen on submitting a candidacy to a MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship, an ERC grant or any other EU call?

We suggest you have a look at the Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) which is the European Commission's primary source of results from the projects funded by the EU's framework programmes for research and innovation (FP1 to Horizon 2020 and now Horizon Europe). CORDIS articles are classified by high-level domains that reflect where the research results could be applied, independently of their field of science. CORDIS mission is to bring research results to professionals in the field to foster open science, create innovative products and services and stimulate growth across Europe.

CORDIS has a rich and structured public repository with all project information held by the European Commission such as project factsheets, participants, reports, deliverables and links to open-access publications.

CORDIS also produces its own range of publications and articles to make it easier for you to find relevant results that you can use in your domain. The print editions are in English while the web versions are also available in French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

CORDIS is managed by the Publications Office of the European Union on behalf of the European Commission’s research and innovation Directorates-General, Executive Agencies and Joint Undertakings, supported by specialised contractors for editorial, data and technical services.

CORDIS is one of the cornerstones of the Commission's strategy to disseminate and exploit research results and it is governed and funded as part of the Horizon 2020 framework programme.

Go to: [https://cordis.europa.eu/about/en](https://cordis.europa.eu/about/en) and follow the red signs:
4 In case you missed it...

Find latest EU Research and Innovation News and open Calls on our EURAXES India website.

About us

EURAXESS India is a networking tool for European researchers active in India and for Indian and international researchers wishing to collaborate with and/or pursue a career in Europe. EURAXESS India provides information about research in Europe, European research policy, opportunities for research funding, for EU-India and international collaboration and for trans-national mobility. Membership is free.

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